

REMARKS

Claims 1-8, 10-15, 17, and 19-29 are pending in this application. Reconsideration of the rejections in view of these amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment, which is captioned "Version with Markings to Show Changes Made."

Rejection under 35 USC §102(e)

Claims 5, 6, 8-13, 15-17 and 19-28 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(e).

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

First of all, it is submitted that Semba (USP No. 6,133,981) is not prior art under 35 USC 102(e). Both the priority date (April 7, 1997) and the US filing date (April 7, 1998) of the present application are prior to the US filing date (June 5, 1998) of Semba.

Thus, the under 35 USC §102(e) rejection should be withdrawn.

Rejection under 35 USC §103(a)

Claims 1-8, 10-15, 17 and 19-29 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Umatate (USP No. 5,243,377).

Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

The examiner appears to think that the operating conditions in Umatate can be stably maintained (lines 6 and 7 on page 4 of the Office Action). The description of Umatate, however, merely indicates that a part of working parameters set in each of the exposure apparatuses is

corrected or modified independently from the control of a process control apparatus in such a manner that the operating conditions set by a process control apparatus (host computer H-COM) can be stably maintained. That is, Umatate aims that the parameters (for example, an alignment parameter) set in each of the exposure apparatuses are corrected or modified appropriately so that the operating condition (which is an optimum operating condition set for each of the steppers, for example, a parameter for alignment) set by the process control apparatus can be maintained at the operating condition which is optimum for the stepper.

In other words, even assuming, *arguendo*, that Umatate discloses a concept of always updating an optimum operating condition, the updating merely means to update, based on the information collected in a certain exposure apparatus A, the parameters of the exposure apparatus A itself. Umatate fails to teach or suggest a concept of setting the parameters of the other exposure apparatus B based on data collected in said exposure apparatus A.

Therefore, Umatate does not teach or suggest, among other things, "a control device electrically connected to the environment sensor, said control device controlling the environment in said at least the other of the first and the second chambers on the basis of a measured value given from said environment sensor in such a manner that the environment of said exposure apparatus becomes the same as the environment of said substrate processing apparatus," as recited in claim 1.

Similarly, Umatate does not teach or suggest, among other things, "obtaining data regarding the environment in a processing chamber in which said substrate processing apparatus is provided; and controlling the environment in an exposure chamber in which said exposure apparatus is provided and which is provided separately from the processing chamber, on the basis of the obtained

data," as recited in claim 5; and "obtaining data regarding the environment in an exposure chamber in which said exposure apparatus is provided; and controlling the environment in a processing chamber in which said processing apparatus is provided and which is provided separately from the exposure chamber, on the basis of the obtained data" as recited in claim 12.

Also, Umatate does not teach or suggest, among other things, "providing an adjusting device which adjusts an environment in said exposure chamber; and providing a control device which controls said adjusting device on the basis of data regarding the environment in said processing chamber," as recited in claim 20; or "providing an adjusting device which adjusts an environment in said processing chamber; and providing a control device which controls said adjusting device on the basis of data regarding the environment in said exposure chamber," as recited in claim 23.

Also, Umatate does not teach or suggest "an adjusting device connected to said exposure chamber and which adjusts an environment in said exposure chamber; and a control device electrically connected to said adjusting device and which controls said adjusting device on the basis of data regarding the environment in said processing chamber," as recited in claim 26; "an adjusting device connected to said exposure chamber and which adjusts an environment in said exposure chamber; and a control device electrically connected to said adjusting device and which controls said adjusting device on the basis of data regarding the environment in said processing chamber," as recited in claim 27; and "an adjusting device connected to said processing chamber and which adjusts an environment in said processing chamber; and a control device electrically connected to said adjusting device and which controls said adjusting device on the basis of data regarding environment in said exposure chamber," as recited in claim 28.

Thus, the under 35 USC §103(a) rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 1-8, 10-15, 17 and 19-29 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Umatate (USP No. 5,243,377) in view of Hasegawa (USP No. 5,828,572).

Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Hasegawa discloses an art of monitoring the operating state of an exposure apparatus (processing chamber) 3 and a C/D apparatus 4 (coater 41 and developer 42). In view of this, the examiner alleged that it is obvious for those skilled in the art to control an environment in a chamber by placing an environment sensor in the exposure apparatus 3 and the C/D apparatus 4.

Even assuming, *arguendo*, that it is obvious to provide or place an environment sensor in the exposure apparatus 3 (i.e., processing chamber 3) and the C/D apparatus 4 (i.e., second processing chamber 4) and to control the environment in the chamber based on the information from the environment sensor, Hasegawa fails to disclose or suggest a concept of controlling an environment in the apparatus B (chamber B), based on the information on an environment sensor provided at a certain apparatus A (chamber B), said apparatus A and B are different from each other. Thus, Hasegawa does not remedy the deficiencies of Umatate.

Therefore, neither Umatate nor Hasegawa discloses a concept of controlling an environment in an apparatus A, based on the information on an environment sensor provided at or in the other apparatus B, not based on the information on an environment sensor provided at or in the apparatus A.

Thus, the under 35 USC §103(a) rejection should be withdrawn.

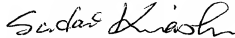
It is submitted that nothing in the cited references, taken either alone or in combination, teaches or suggests all the features recited in each claim of the present invention. Thus all pending claims are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the rejections, withdrawal of the rejections and an early issue of a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

Enclosures: Version with markings to show changes made

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1, 5, 12, 20, 23, 26, 27 and 28 have been amended as follows:

1. (Twice Amended) A lithography system comprising:

an exposure apparatus which projects a pattern on to a substrate on which resist is coated,

a substrate processing apparatus ~~connected to~~ provided adjacent to said exposure

apparatus which processes the substrate:

a first chamber containing the exposure apparatus therein;

a second chamber provided adjacent to the first chamber separately from said first

chamber and which contains the substrate processing apparatus therein;

an environment sensor provided in at least one of the first and the second chambers which measures an environment in said at least one of the first and the second chambers; and

a control device electrically connected to the environment sensor, said control device

controlling the environment in said at least ~~one~~ the other of the first and the second chambers on

the basis of a measured value given from said environment sensor in such a manner that the

environment of said exposure apparatus becomes the same as the environment of said substrate processing apparatus.

5. (Twice Amended) A lithography method for controlling an environment in an exposure apparatus which exposes a substrate and which is ~~connected to~~ provided adjacent to a substrate processing apparatus which processes the substrate before or after exposure, the method comprising the steps of:

obtaining data regarding the environment in a processing chamber in which said substrate processing apparatus is provided; and

controlling the environment in an exposure chamber in which said exposure apparatus is provided and which is provided separately from the processing chamber, on the basis of the obtained data.

12. (Twice Amended) A lithography method for controlling an environment in a substrate processing apparatus which processes a substrate before or after exposure, said substrate processing apparatus being ~~connected to~~ provided adjacent to an exposure apparatus which exposes the substrate before or after the processing, the method comprising the steps of:

obtaining data regarding the environment in an exposure chamber in which said exposure apparatus is provided; and

controlling the environment in a processing chamber in which said processing apparatus is provided and which is provided separately from the exposure chamber, on the basis of the obtained data.

20. (Twice Amended) A method for making an exposure apparatus which exposes a substrate, said exposure apparatus being ~~connected to~~ provided adjacent to a substrate processing apparatus contained in a processing chamber which processes the substrate before or after exposure of the substrate, the method comprising the steps of:

providing an exposure body in an exposure chamber different from the processing chamber, the exposure body performing an exposure operation of the substrate;

providing an adjusting device which adjusts an environment in said exposure chamber;

and

providing a control device which controls said adjusting device on the basis of data regarding the environment in said processing chamber.

23. (Twice Amended) A method for making a substrate processing apparatus which processes a substrate and which is ~~connected to~~ provided adjacent to an exposure apparatus contained in an exposure chamber which exposes the substrate before or after the processing of the substrate, the method comprising the steps of:

providing an exposure body in a processing chamber different from the exposure chamber, the processing body performing a processing operation to the substrate;

providing an adjusting device which adjusts an environment in said processing chamber;

and

providing a control device which controls said adjusting device on the basis of data regarding the environment in said exposure chamber.

26. (Twice Amended) A lithography method using an exposure apparatus which exposes a substrate and a substrate processing apparatus which processes the substrate before or after exposure, the method comprising the steps of:

obtaining data regarding an environment in within a chamber of one of an exposure chamber in which said exposure apparatus is contained and a processing chamber in which said substrate processing apparatus is contained and which is provided separately from the exposure chamber; and

controlling the environment in the other chamber of the exposure chamber and the processing chamber on the basis of the obtained data.

27. (Twice Amended) An exposure apparatus which exposes a substrate and which is ~~connected to~~ provided adjacent to a substrate processing apparatus contained in a processing chamber which processes the substrate before or after exposure of the substrate, the exposure apparatus comprising:

an exposure chamber which is separate from the processing chamber and contains the exposure apparatus;

an adjusting device connected to said exposure chamber and which adjusts an environment in said exposure chamber; and

a control device electrically connected to said adjusting device and which controls said adjusting device on the basis of data regarding the environment in said processing chamber.

28. (Twice Amended) A substrate processing apparatus which processes a substrate and which is ~~connected to~~ provided adjacent to an exposure apparatus contained in an exposure chamber which exposes the substrate before or after the substrate processing, the substrate processing apparatus comprising:

a processing chamber which is separate from the exposure chamber and contains the substrate processing apparatus;

an adjusting device connected to said processing chamber and which adjusts an environment in said processing chamber; and

a control device electrically connected to said adjusting device and which controls said adjusting device on the basis of data regarding environment in said exposure chamber.